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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography of 45 children's books with Cajun themes includes books using Cajun dialect and common French phrases, books revealing the importance of the family unit and the "joie de vivre" associated with the Cajun culture, and books recording the regional Cajun folklore. Each annotation consists of author, title, publisher, interest level, reading level, and a brief description of the book. The books and their authors include: (1) "Cajun Folklore" (Jim Bergeron); (2) "Clovis Crawfish and His Friends" (Mary Alice Fontenot); (3) "Dark Gator, Villain of the Atchafalaya" (Tim Elder); and (4) "Cajun Dictionary" (James Sothern). (MM)

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## AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN"S BOOKS WITH CAJUN THEMES

Many of the people of southwest Louisiana are descendants of the Acadians, a group of French-speaking people exiled from Nova Scotia, Acadia, in the mid-1750's. By the late 1770's, many Acadians had settled in portions of south Louisiana. Their influence is still evident in the dialect and customs of south Louisiana.

Many of their descendants, known as Cajuns, still speak a form of French or speak an English dialect which has been influenced by the Cajun French vocabulary and pronunciation. Within the last twenty-five years, an awareness of the uniqueness of the Cajun culture has arisen, as well as efforts to preserve the language and traditions of this unique cultural group.

In response to the need to awaken awareness, as well as preserve the culture and instill pride, several authors who write for the young have recounted their tales using the dialect and common French phrases, such as Mary Alice Fontenot in her series of Clovis Crawfish and his bayou friends. Others, like Tim Edler, have revealed the significance of Louisiana wildlife in the lives of many Cajuns. Other writers have recorded the regional folklore, like John Bergeron in Cajun Folklore and Bayou Cajuns. Still others have revealed the importance of the family unit and the joie de vivre, the joy of life, associated with the Cajun culture. What follows is an annotated bibliography of children's books with Cajun themes, useful to teachers, librarians, and those interested in specific ethnic groups and their languages and cultures.

### Children's Books with Cajun Themes

**Amoss, Berthe. The Loup Garou. Pelican, 1979. Interest level 3-6, reading level 4-6.**

**With the aid of the legendary Loup Garou, a French family in Nova Scotia escapes from the English and after many hardships arrives in southwest Louisiana.**

Bergeron, John. Bayou Cajuns. Century, 1985. Interest level junior-senior high, reading level 7-9.

Contains a variety of stories depicting the Cajun way of life. The author intended the collection to be a historical record of specific incidents in south Louisiana. The incidents were related by the characters themselves or their friends and relations.

Bergeron, John. Cajun Folklore. Bergeron, 1980. Interest level 4-7, reading level 5-7.

In his characteristic style, Bergeron illustrates this collection of folktales with the flavor of Cajun culture.

Blackwell, Muriel Fontenot. The Secret Dream. Broadman, 1981. Interest level 4-8, reading level 4-6.

In spite of family pressures, Nettie and her artist brother dream of life beyond the farm and ricelands of their home in Acadiana.

Bougere, Marguerite. Louisiana Stories for Boys and Girls. Louisiana State University Press, 1966. Interest level 5-8, reading level 4-6.

A number of well-known authors contribute to this collection of stories, several of which have Acadian characters and settings.

Carpenter, Allan. Louisiana. Children's Press, 1967. Interest level 5-7, reading level 7-9.

This simple history of Louisiana refers several times to the Acadians.

Crump, Elaine Charmichael. Chinaberry Beads. Pelican, 1978. Interest level junior-senior high (poetry).

Crump's poems, some humorous, some serious, have as their theme the customs of the Acadians.

Durio, Alice. Cajun Columbus. Pelican, 1975. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

On a journey full of ridiculous adventures, Pierre Lastrapes guides Columbus across the "big bayou" to the land of the Acadians.

Edler, Tim. The Adventures of Crawfish-Man. Little Cajun Books, 1979. Interest level 4-7, reading level 5-7.

The heroic Crawfish-Man rescues T-Boy from the Moss Monster.

Edler, Tim. Cooncan, Boy of the Swamp. Little Cajun Books, 1983. Interest level 4-6, reading level 4-6.

This is the beginning story of an orphan boy who lives in the middle of the swamp with Kongo, a water moccasin; Shaw-Tig, a bobcat; and E-Boo, an owl. Footnotes are used to explain Cajun and Indian names and terms.

Edler, Time. Crawfish-Man Rescues the Ol' Beachcomber. Little Cajun Books, 1985. Interest level 4-7, reading level 5-7.

Inspired by an appreciation for the wildlife of South Louisiana, Edler relates the adventure of the Ol' Beachcomber on the Gulf Coast and how the indigenous birds and fish (and Crawfish-Man) contribute to his rescue.

Edler, Tim. Crawfish Man's Fifty Ways to Keep your Kids from Using Drugs. Little Cajun Books, 1982. Interest level K-8, reading level 3-6.

Crawfish-Man explains why drugs are pa bon (no good). He suggests fifty ways to keep from using drugs including gymnastics, art, paddling a pirogue and picking Spanish moss.

Edler, Tim. Crawfish-Man's Night Before Christmas. Little Cajun Books, 1986. Interest level 3-6, reading level 5-6.

Learn how one Christmas Eve Fat Pa-Tot and Dark Gator team up to try and spoil Christmas. But thanks to Cooncan and T-Boy and the Louidiana "Superhereaux," Crawfish-Man, they are in for a battle.

Edler, Tim. Crawfish-Man Rescues Ron Guidry. Little Cajun Books, 1980. Interest level 4-7, reading level 5-7.

Ron Guidry is captured by an opposing team, but is rescued just in time by Crawfish-Man.

Edler, Tim. Dark Gator, Villain of the Atchafalaya. Little Cajun Books, 1980. Interest level 4-6, reading level 4-6.

Aided by the villain, Dark Gator, the Swamp Witch called Fat Pa-Tot, is determined to capture all the swamp animals, but again Crawfish-Man saves the day.

Edler, Tim. Maurice the Snake and Gaston the Near-Sighted Turtle. Little Cajun Books, 1977. Interest level 3-6, reading level 4-6.

The two friends are swimming in the bayou when Gaston is suddenly caught in a fisherman's net and seems destined for the soup-pot, but Maurice rescues his friend in a most ingenious way.

Edler, Tim. Rhombus the Cajun Unicorn. Little Cajun Books, 1984. Interest level 4-7, reading level 4-7.

Meet Rhombus, the remarkable magical unicorn who befriends Colinda, the little Cajun girl. Through the unicorn's explanation of how he came to Louisiana, the reader learns of the Acadians' exile and final settlement in Louisiana.

Edler, Tim. Santa's Cajun Christmas Adventure. Little Cajun Books, 1981. Interest level 2-6 (picture book).

In this Cajun version of The Night Before Christmas, Santa makes his rounds on the bayou in a little boat drawn by a team of crawfish.

Edler, Tim. T-Boy and the Trial for Life. Little Cajun Books, 1978. Interest level 3-6, reading level 4-6.

Naturally no one believed the outlandish tale that T-Boy told about being carried down to the bottom of the bayou where he was made to appear before Judge Mud Cat. Would you?

Edler, Tim. T-Boy the Little Cajun. Little Cajun Books, 1978. Interest level 3-6, reading level 4-6.

Big Moise is T-Boy's father and they live on the bayou where they fish, hunt, and gather moss for a living.

Edler, Tim. T-Boy in Mossland. Little Cajun Books, 1978. Interest level 2-5, reading level 3-5.

Just as he is about to be boiled alive in Mossland, T-Boy is rescued by a little crawfish he had befriended.

Engelhardt, Zelma. Beyond the Bayous. Claitors, 1962. Interest level 7-9 (poetry).

A collection of stories, poems, and monologues of special interest to those who live in the bayou country. Probably should be used with children rather than by them.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis and Etienne Escargot. Pelican, 1985. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Clovis finds new friends and new adventures described in typical Cajun dialect and humorous drawings.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and Curious Crapaud. Claitors, 1970. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Corinne, the Crapaud, looks and acts very strange to Clovis and his friends, but they help her improve her looks and her vocabulary.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and His Friends. Pelican, 1985. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Clovis Crawfish has many exciting adventures with his unusual friends who live on the bayou. Originally issued in 1962 with black and white illustrations, this story launched the entire series.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and Michelle Mantis. Claitors, 1976. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Readers will enjoy the meeting of Clovis and Michelle Mantis.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and the Orphan Zo-Zo. Pelican, 1983. Interest level K-3(picture book).

Clovis rescues a baby blue jay who has fallen from his nest and convinces his bayou friends that although the blue jay may grow up to be a threat to them, they must do what they can to save the young bird's life.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and Petit Papillon. Pelican, 1984. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Bertile Butterfly leaves her Petit Papillon in the care of Clovis and his friends and near disaster results.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and Spinning Spider. Claitors, 1968. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Though their encounter with Spinning Spider and her web is not altogether happy, Clovis and his friends finally accept her.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and the Big Betail. Claitors, 1963. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

At first Clovis and his friends are afraid of the "big betail," Andrew Armadillo, but they discover that under his hard shell is a soft heart.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Clovis Crawfish and the Singing Cigales. Pelican, 1981. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

The singing Cigales, Chicot and Coteau, have a fine time on the bayou with Clovis.

Fontenot, Mary Alice. Ghost of Bayou Tigre. Claitors, 1965. Interest level 5-8, reading level 6-8.

Elise Comeaux is surprised to find that her visit to her uncle on Bayou Tigre is not the boring experience a city girl would expect but rather one of fun and excitement.

Lenski, Lois. Bayou Suzette. Lippincott, 1943. Interest level 4-7, reading level 3-5.

Suzette lives in a fishing village on the bayou where she has many adventures with her Indian friend Marteel.

Oradel, Morris Nolen. Le Monde Acadien de Ti-Jean: The Cajun World of Ti-Jean. Paupieres, 1980. Interest level 3-6, reading level 4-6.

Through a little Cajun boy, Ti-Jean, the reader is introduced to Cajun customs, traditions and language. The text is written in French and English.

Rice, James. Cajun Alphabet. Pelican, 1976. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Gaston the alligator learns his alphabet with certain Cajun words and phrases.

Rice, James. Gaston Goes to Mardi Gras. Pelican, 1977. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Gaston doesn't miss any of the Mardi Gras festivities.

Rice, James. Gaston Lays an Offshore Pipeline. Pelican, 1979. Interest level K-3.

A barge loaded with pipe moves through the bayou and Gaston joins the crew in laying the pipeline.

Rice, James. Gaston, the Green-Nosed Alligator. Pelican, 1974. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

Gaston explains how he came to Santa's rescue on Christmas Eve.

Saucier, Corinne L. Folktales from French Louisiana. Claitors, 1962. Interest level 3-8, reading level 4-6.

This is a collection of folktales with familiar themes but a flavor of the French culture.

Smith, George. Bayou Boy and the Wolf Dog. Quality Books, 1973. Interest level 5-8, reading level 6-8.

A moving-van accident results in a young German Shepherd pup being lost in the woods and later adopted by a female wolf who has lost her pups.

Sonnier, Isadore L. Cajun Boy. Exposition Press, 1980. Interest level 5-9, reading level 6-8

T'Jean relates the experiences of his family from their time in Canada until years later when they are settled in southwest Louisiana, giving a real insight into the Cajun way of life.

Sothern, James. Cajun Dictionary. Sothern, 1977. Interest level junior high.

A unique dictionary of Cajun words and phrases, both used and misused. Entries are spelled according to pronunciation in Cajun dialect and used in the context of a sentence. The Cajun humor is readily brought forth. This would be useful in a comparative study of dialects.

Tallant, Robert. Evangeline and the Acadians. Random, 1957. Interest level 5-8, reading level 6-8.

The tragic story of the exile of the Acadians from Canada tells of their painful journey to Louisiana where they find friendly places and people.

Trosclair. Cajun Night Before Christmas. Pelican, 1974. Interest level K-3 (picture book).

A new version of the familiar tale is appropriate to Christmas on the bayou.

Wilson, Justin and Hadley, Jay. Justin Wilson's Cajun Fables. Pelican, 1982. Interest level 6-8, reading level 6-8.

Well-known Cajun humorist Justin Wilson has adapted five familiar stories and 19 nursery rhymes, creating "Goldilocks and the Three Crawfish," "The Three Little Couchons," "Petite Rouge Riding Hood," and "Jacques and Jill".

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